



Department of Justice

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INDIANA STATE EMPLOYEES FEDERALLY INDICTED FOR LARGE SCALE THEFT

PRESS RELEASE

INDIANAPOLIS - Joseph H. Hogsett, United States Attorney, said today, "anyone who steals from Hoosier taxpayers will be held strictly accountable by this Office. This is particularly so when it is theft by public employees, people who have violated our trust." Hogsett announced the arrests of Indianapolis residents Robert Edwards, Timberly Snyder, and Adina Lopez, employees of the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA). The three were charged in a federal indictment with stealing nearly \$200,000 from federal programs administered by the FSSA, following an investigation by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration.

During the course of the multi-agency investigation, it was determined that from December 2008, and continuing to April 2010, Edwards, Snyder and Lopez defrauded FSSA and stole approximately \$191,103.89 from FSSA in general, and the federally-funded Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Food Stamp programs in particular. The theft was accomplished by creating fraudulent electronic benefits transfer (EBT) cards, similar to commercial debit cards, which Edwards, Snyder and Lopez then used to withdraw funds from commercial automated teller machines (ATMs), purchase goods at retail stores, and/or sell and trade the EBT cards to third parties in exchange for U.S. currency or other items of value.

The Indictment alleges Edwards, Snyder and Lopez used the various computer systems and databases available to them as FSSA employees to identify benefit recipients whose names and accounts could be used to generate seemingly legitimate OTC cards for benefits. Unbeknownst to the recipients, Edwards, Snyder and Lopez then generated fraudulent benefit cards containing TANF and Food Stamp benefits in the names of more than 100 different individuals.

The Indictment charges that Edwards was responsible for fraudulently creating at least 62 EBT cards with a total value of \$125,816.40. Of that amount, \$74,389.17 was stolen from the

Food Stamp program and \$51,427.23 was stolen from TANF. During that same time period, Snyder fraudulently created at least 60 EBT cards with a total value of \$59,900.82. Of that amount, \$34,319.70 was stolen from the Food Stamp program and \$25,581.12 was stolen from TANF. Also during that time period, Lopez fraudulently created at least our EBT cards with total value of \$5,386.87 stolen from the in stolen Food Stamp program

Mike Carter, General Counsel for FSSA stated, "FSSA was involved in this investigation from the beginning and will continue to aggressively investigate and pursue instances of fraud - whether it involves employees or recipients. We were pleased to partner with the United States Department of Agriculture, Health and Human Services, U. S. Marshall Service, Indiana State Police, and the United States Attorney's Office in this investigation. FSSA strongly supports the prosecution of anyone guilty of defrauding Indiana taxpayers."

FSSA administers both the TANF program and Food Stamp program for Indiana beneficiaries on behalf of the United States Government. Funding for the TANF program is provided to FSSA by the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), while funding for the Food Stamp program is provided by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

According to Assistant U.S. Attorney Matthew J. Rinka, who is prosecuting the case for the government, faces a maximum of ten years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. An initial hearing will be scheduled for at a later date in Indianapolis, Indiana before a U.S. Magistrate Judge.

An indictment is only a charge and is not evidence of guilt. A defendant is presumed innocent and is entitled to a fair trial at which the government must prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

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